

GRACE ALONE

The sixteenth in a series of articles on Grace Alone by Dr. J. R. Lavik,

President Luther Seminary, Saskatoon

GRACE AND THE SACRAMENTS

We shall not in this connection enter upon extensive discussion of the Sacraments. Our sole interest is to indicate very briefly the relation of grace to the Sacraments. We believe it is essential to a scriptural understanding of these institutions of God that the basic fact of salvation by grace alone be given its due emphasis in any doctrinal presentation of either sacrament. Most doctrinal perversions in this field, and it would seem most difficulties in the administration of these sacred ordinances, arise out of a failure to understand or to apply the principle of grace alone.

Holy Baptism

Let us from this point of view briefly consider the Sacrament of Baptism, particularly infant Baptism, for that is the point at which most difficulties and perversions come to a focus.

The objections most commonly raised against infant baptism centre upon the claim that an infant cannot believe, and the conclusion is drawn therefore it should not be baptized. Involved in this objection, more or less clearly understood, is the assumption that there is something meritorious in faith, because of which God forgives the sinner and creates in him a new life of the Spirit. The grown person can demonstrate conversion, can confess his sins and his faith in the Savior, and at least make so much of a contribution toward his own salvation. But the infant has nothing to show that can constitute a basis for the operations of God's saving work. The basic principle in this line of thinking is not grace alone, but some virtue on man's part, and then what grace may be necessary on God's part for effectuating salvation. Its advocates will not state it so definitely or crudely, but upon close analysis this will be found to be the substance of it.

Over against this generally synergistic trend of thought we place the fundamental principle of grace alone. Salvation is of God, and not of man. Peter says (I Pet. 3:21) that "Baptism doth now save us." It does not really contribute a part, in addition to what we may be able to do, but it saves. That is, God saves through this visible means, as the Holy Spirit through Baptism blots out guilt and creates a new life. The same essential fact is stated by Paul in Titus 3: 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Here it is emphatically asserted that we are not saved by our own virtues. And He did so through Baptism, which in His Almighty and gracious hand is "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." That it is all of grace is made supremely clear, because it is bestowed upon us "through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:8).

Here, too, we may say, "All things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." The principle of salvation by grace alone applies emphatically to infant Baptism.

But some would raise the objection that God does not apply His saving grace indiscriminately. Scripture indicates conditions that must be met, and the basic condition is faith. For Scripture says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mar. 16: 18).

It is true, as we have pointed out in regard to His entire Gospel dispensation, God does not bestow His grace upon sinners indiscriminately. Grace implies certain conditions, and this is true also in reference to infant Baptism. For instance, one condition is specified in Matt. 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." Here we are told that teaching must follow Baptism. We have no right to baptize our children unless we accept the obligation to teach them as soon as possible to know Christ personally. At the appropriate time there is a teaching involved; there are things to observe; and faith is a factor. Also in Baptism, and infant Baptism is no exception, salvation is by grace through faith. But grace is here as always the cause, the sole cause, and faith only a means, an agency through which the gift of salvation is received. **and never involves merit, is never a cause. It becomes necessary for us, therefore, to give some attention to the nature and the functions of faith, particularly in relation to infant Baptism.**

CONVOCATION EXERCISES

The Convocation Exercises of Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Lutheran College and Seminary will be held in Zion Lutheran Church, on Friday, May 19th at 8.00 p.m.

ORDINATION

The following candidates will be ordained at Zion Lutheran Church on May 21st, 1950: Arnold B. H. Hagen, called to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Martin S. Knudson, called to Kyle, Saskatchewan; L. Thomas Nilsson, called to Medstead, Saskatchewan; Palmer S. Olson, called to Provost, Alberta; Norman M. Salte, called to Admiral, Saskatchewan.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Student placements for the summer months are as follows: Bentley, Alberta, Curtis Satre; Crooked River, Saskatchewan; Harold Solheim; Estevan, Saskatchewan, Sidney Nelson; Foremost, Alberta, Johan Hesje; Hanley, Saskatchewan, Haakon Olson; Macrorie, Saskatchewan, Albert Olson; Margo, Saskatchewan, Roy Hafso; Morrin, Alberta, Milton Rude; Swift Current, Saskatchewan, William Braaten; Amisk, Alberta, Arthurs Olson.

THE S.L.B.I. CHOIR TOUR

The Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute which toured northern and eastern Saskatchewan April 29 to May 7. At most of its 18 concerts it sang to capacity crowds. Receipts from the offerings totalled over \$1,000 above travel expenses. The entire surplus was turned into the building fund.

DR. LAVIK SPEAKS

Dr. J. R. Lavik will preach on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (C.B.C.) on Sunday, June 4th at 12:30 p.m., Mountain Daylight Saving Time.

Thoughts on Lutheran Union

(This article was solicited from Pastor Grundahl after hearing his presentation at the Edmonton-Camrose Circuit Pastoral Conference held in Bawlf. We feel that it throws light on the issue facing our church, and sets forth too, the peculiar situation with which our District is faced.)

The writer of this article had entertained no thoughts of appearing in print with any of his attitudes on Lutheran Union. The subject is so vast and so important, and my study of it so limited, that it is with some hesitancy that this article is submitted. It resulted from having been asked to present some introductory explanations for a discussion at a recent Circuit pastoral conference, and consequently being asked to state some of the things presented, for the pages of The Shepherd. Its chief purpose shall be to present some of the things involved in the forthcoming union proposals.

The reader may already know that there are chiefly two union plans being submitted for consideration at our forthcoming convention. The one, proposed by Augustana Synod at its centennial convention in 1948, would favor uniting all eight bodies of the National Lutheran Council, consisting of the American Lutheran Church, the Augustana Lutheran Church, the Danish Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Finnish Suomi Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church, to make a body that would approximate about four million. Though further preparations for such union would undoubtedly postpone the actual union for some years, our convention will be asked if it is "willing at this time to approve in principle complete organic union with other participating bodies in the N.L.C." Our Church Council has indicated in its "Unity Statement" that it does not feel we are ready for such union nor for a federation of these bodies while such union is being worked out.

The second union plan, which will undoubtedly receive the chief consideration, is that which originated with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) in 1948, and which was met by our church with sufficient approval so that at its 1948 convention an official union committee was voted to take part in negotiations with the participating bodies. Dr. Lavik was appointed a member of that committee, so we of Canada also feel that we have a direct representation. This plan would propose to unite three Lutheran bodies, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish), The American Lutheran Church (German), and our own Evangelical Lutheran Church, to constitute one church which would have a membership of approximately 1,505,000. It would not eliminate or exclude the possibility of further organic union with other bodies. All three of these bodies have been fellowshiping together within the boundaries of the American Lutheran Conference since 1930, with pulpit and altar fellowship, and co-operating to endeavor to prevent overlapping of their work in the same areas. This would indicate that there would be a very good possibility that there would be no difficulties in reaching doctrinal unity in preparation for the proposed union, a matter of primary importance. However other problems also appear which should at least be honestly faced in making one's de-

Former Canada District President Passes On

The Reverend J. J. Akre, president of Canada District from 1923 to 1935 passed away April 20th in his home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Funeral services were held in Lake Nokomis Church in Minneapolis, and the following day in Bergen Church near Hazel Run, Minnesota. His remains were laid to rest in Bergen cemetery.

Reverend J. J. Akre reached the age of 87 years. He was born April 14, 1863 in Strandvik, Midhordland, Norway and came with his parents Johannes O. Akre and Martha Malene, at the age of two. He was ordained in 1892. He served the following parishes: Kindred, North Dakota; Belmond, Iowa; Dell, Minnesota; Lidgerwood, North Dakota; Estherville, Iowa; and Bode, Iowa. He came to Canada in 1919 and served as pastor for the Winnipeg congregation. He was elected to the position of District President in 1923.

His wife, (nee Anna M. Stenson) predeceased him. President Akre leaves to mourn his departure five daughters. He also has two brothers, Carl Akre, Statler, Alberta, and Edward Akre in Vancouver, B.C.

Blessed be the memory of this servant of the Lord.

cision in the matter, though they may perhaps not necessarily lead to a negative decision.

One of the decisive considerations will no doubt be the question of what emphasis will issue from such a union. Without any desire to assume any "holier than thou" attitude, we have watched grow within our E.L.C. during not much more than the last decade a strong emphasis on evangelism and personal Christianity, which we would not like to see chilled in any way. We are not unaware that there are some very fine minds bent in that same direction in the other bodies also, as well as that there are trends within our own body that would seem to lead more in the other direction. But we are concerned about that the present stress on a warm personal piety, revival and evangelistic efforts of all kinds, and the standards of separation from the world and crucifixion of the flesh (Gal. 5:24) which are sometimes conveniently dumped into the term "adiaphora" and left there, should not be watered down in the enlargement of our church. It would be a questionable advantage if we were to increase our size to the loss of some of these developments which are not on too stable legs in all parts of our own church. Will the union trend to strengthen or to weaken the emphasis which we have loved and nurtured? The spiritual impact of a church will rest more on the power of the "inner man" than on the numerical size in outward organization. And we exist for the spiritual impact we can make.

One immediate change that the union would bring about, would be the mode of representation at our general conventions. Because of the size of the body it would no longer be possible to have the direct representation from every congregation and parish which we now have. True, we are at the verge of a change even as it is in our church, but doubling our size would of course mean a much more drastic change in order not to have too large and unwieldy general conventions. Already the American Lutheran Church divides each of its thirteen districts into eighteen parts,

(Continued on Page Three)

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THE WADENA NEWS

THE REVEREND J. J. AKRE

One of our former district presidents has crossed the borderline into eternity. For many years, 1923-35, Reverend J. J. Akre throughout the circuits of our Canadian Church. Through the Shepherd we wish to pay tribute to his memory.

Reverend J. J. Akre was a humble servant of the Lord. He moved in and out among the people of our district as a kind and congenial friend. He brought a positive Christian witness. Years have passed now since he left our District, but we are certain that the memory of his service lingers in the hearts of many.

We remember his reading of the Word of God. When Reverend J. J. Akre read the scriptures perhaps the remark about Dr. Thomas Skinner and his reading of the Scriptures also applies to our former district president. Of Dr. Skinner it is written: "I actually searched my Bible to see whether they were really there as he read them. The manner of his delivery (in reading) seemed to clothe the passages with new meaning altogether." So it was also with Rev. J. J. Akre.

The existence of The Shepherd, humanly speaking, is largely due to the untiring effort of our departed friend. When the paper was, seemingly hopelessly in debt, it was Reverend and Mrs. J. J. Akre who wrote a personal check of some over one thousand dollars to settle the account with the Publishing House. He believed The Shepherd had a place to fill and gave unstintingly to help it survive.

We pay tribute to the memory of our departed leader. His ministry too, was marked by human frailty, but when he moved among his people it was felt that here was a humble servant of the Lord.

LUTHERAN UNION

We commend to your attention the article entitled "Thoughts on Lutheran Union," by Pastor K. C. Grundahl. We feel that he has presented the facts in a clear and informing way. We shall try to have some more comments on this question in the first June issue of The Shepherd, which will be the last issue before the General Convention.

THE UNITED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION APPEAL

It is imperative for our District to complete the ingathering for this purpose as soon as possible. Building operations have been begun and are planned with the full quota expected from Canada District as a basis. The summer months will fly quickly by. It is urgent. Let us pray and work that this may speedily be accomplished.

FINAL RESULTS 1949

From "My Father's Business," we cull the following: Budget contributions for 1949 was a total of \$28,573.84 which is \$2.93 per confirmed member. This is a fine record. Contributions to Lutheran World Action for 1949 amounted to \$15,076.15 which is \$1.55 per confirmed member. Part of that total, however, was a carry-over from the previous year so the

actual contribution was perhaps about 100 per cent. The goal was \$14,000.00. Let us pray and work that we may reach our goal also in 1950.

District News

CAMROSE CIRCUIT SPRING CONVENTION AT NEW NORWAY MAY 26th to MAY 28th, 1950

S. J. Rude, Pastor

THEME: "Come, Learn of Me." Matthew 11:28, 29.

Friday evening: 8.00 p.m., Prayer Session led by Peter Matheson, followed by film. Message by Rev. Raymond Olson, "Come, Learn of Me to Live by my Grace."

Saturday Morning, 10.30 a.m.: Prayer Session led by Mr. Oscar Grue of Ardena. 11.00 a.m., Business Session.

Saturday Afternoon, 2.00 p.m.: Prayer Session led by August Stolee. Sub-topics: "Come, Learn of Me to Live by my Power," Pastor Walker; "Come, Learn of Me by Bringing Them in," Pastor Rude.

Saturday Evening, 8.00 p.m.: Prayer Session led by Daniel Vinge; Sub-topic, "Come, Learn of Me by Giving Them a Christian Training," Pastor Bergsagel. Film, "The Difference." Offering to U.C.E. Appeal.

Sunday Morning, 11.00 a.m., Communion service, local pastor in charge. Sermon by Pastor S. Stolee.

Sunday Afternoon, 2.00 p.m.: Prayer Session led by Mr. A. G. Lewis. Sub-Topic, "Come, Learn of Me by Sending Them Forth," Pastor Grundahl. Special music by Garry Johnson and Clifford Hoyme. Testimonies and contributions by others. Circuit offering.

Evening Session, 7.30 p.m.: Opening Devotion (to be selected). C.L.C. Choir concert under the direction of Mr. Marken. Sub-Topic, "Come, Learn of Me so That You May Enjoy Eternal Glory." Palmer Olson or Daniel Vinge.

Pray that God may give us a blessed Spring Rally with seasons of refreshing.

—Percy Bergquist, Secretary.

EVANGELIST NELS PEDERSEN'S VISIT

The Ardena parish experienced rich spiritual blessings recently while Evangelist Nels Pedersen was here. How thankful to God we are for the stir that took place in our hearts, and throughout the parish; Surely they were days when the Holy Spirit did some mighty thorough heart-searchings, when anyone not knowing where he or she stood in their relationship with the Lord were really talked to by the Spirit! As he through the Word reasoned to us of sin, righteousness and judgment, we were brought to feel very much like the disciples of old, who after sitting at the feet of Jesus went to tell the others saying "did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to the Scriptures! The Psalmist speaks for us when he says (Ps. 115:1) "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give Glory."

The St. Joseph's congregation, Ardena parish, R. O. Olson, pastor, besides remodelling their church, have recently arranged for an organ and a piano for their church! The organ was given as a gift from the Calgary congregation, for which we are very grateful; while the piano was purchased also from them. They have recently installed a Wurlitzer organ in their church. To be the recipients of this organ, the St. Joseph's congregation traded another one which they received as a gift from Mrs. Martha Hendrickson of Bittern Lake district, which will be going to the church at Enchant, Alberta. We are grateful to God for His leading and goodness in this matter!

The St. Joseph Church will be dedicated on Sunday, June 11, with Dr. Mars A. Dale officiating. There will

be two services that day, at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

PASTOR GERHARD OSTREM

This news item is taken from the Missionary. However, we learn that no word has come from Pastor Ostrem since immediately after he set out for this mission work. Some concern is felt for his safety. Let us remember him in prayer.

"Rev. Gerhard Ostrem is still working in the Plains area of Colombia, according to last reports. He has followed some of the refugees out to outlying sections where there is neither mail nor telephone service. Contact has therefore, not been kept with him during the past two or three weeks. We are happy for the continued possibility that he finds for work among the people in those areas."

CORRECTION OF BETHANY SUNSET HOME LIST

December 5th Issue:

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Erickson, gift of \$400.00 listed as \$125.00.

The following In Memoriam gifts given by Mr. and Martin Erickson were erroneously listed:

In memory of Mr. Stenwell, \$1.00 printed as gift from Morton Stenvold.

In memory of W. Atkinson, \$1.00 printed as gift from Mr. and Mrs. A. Erickson.

In memory of Mrs. Hovde, \$1.00 omitted from list.

EUROPEAN STUDY-WORK PROJECTS

Dorothy Vinge of Camrose has been selected as one of the twenty students for Study-Work projects in Europe this summer. The Student Division of the National Lutheran Council makes the selection. The group to which she will be attached is to be stationed in Berlin. Further details later.

EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

Evangelistic meetings will be conducted by Pastor Lars Stalsbrotten of East Stanwood, Washington, under the auspices of the Central Alberta Lutheran Innermission Society. Meetings will be held at the following places: Thronheim congregation, Pastor S. Johnson's parish, June 2, 3 and 4. At Ferry Point, Pastor O. K. Olson's parish June 9, 10 and 11 and possibly in Pastor Henning Olsen's parish at Chauvin, the following week.

Mr. Tormod Vaagen of Oslo, Norway, well known General Secretary of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission to China and Japan is also travelling through Canada at this time in the interest of this mission. His schedule is as follows: Camrose, Bethany Sunset Home, May 24th, 2.00 p.m.; Camrose Lutheran Church, 8.00 p.m.; Edmonton at Central Lutheran, May 25, 8.00 p.m. from where he leaves for Saskatoon on May 26th. Later he will be in Pastor Gordon Hope's parish at Estevan, Saskatchewan. It is seldom that we have a visitor like this, so let us attend, as many as possible, from far and near.

Pray for showers of blessings.

—Martin Erickson, president Central Alberta Lutheran Innermission Society.

THE ATONEMENT AND SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Condensation of an article by William E. Hulme, in April, 1950, Lutheran Outlook, by P.B.S.

Our Church teaches, we firmly believe, the true doctrine of the atonement: God's and man's reconciliation. Yet it seems to be true that many folks, also within our church, have not personally experienced this atonement. How can we say this? Because so many live with a heart full of the sense of shame and guilt, and that after seemingly having accepted forgiveness—the very core of the atonement. The atonement sets us free. Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. To know here

means to experience. Having the precious definition on the tip of your tongue is not, however, identical with experiencing the spiritual freedom the atonement was meant to give. And so, too, often, church goers leave the most glorious presentation of the atonement, still bound in soul with the fetters of guilt and its resultant fear. The result is turmoil and neurosis. There is no freedom and spontaneity in their lives.

Have we found ourselves "up this street?" While we sing, "Just as I am, Thou wilt receive," we really doubt that we can accept ourselves just as we are. And so, instead of accepting God's forgiveness and evaluation of us as clean, we continue to punish ourselves mentally for the failings for which Christ has suffered the punishment. This leaves us especially open to further sinning along the same line, for as we do not really accept forgiveness, we also neglect to accept power for new living. And we must not identify this feeling of being undeserving with humility for it is really based on a rejection of the entire conception of divine grace. The atonement of Christ is not allowed to combat our urge to make our own atonements for our own sins. Seemingly we cannot gain peace unless we feel we have paid at least part of the price, endured at least some of the sacrifice, for our sinful nature. Hence we actually fear the thought of being freed from the anxiety because anxiety is a portion of the Cross we ourselves are suffering, a discomfort for which we feel the need in order to live with our own conscience. And so we grow uneasy at the prospect of being honestly happy, because we feel that we do not deserve to be happy, and that curtailment of happiness must be part of our lot due to the unworthiness we feel. This is an attitude which by its very nature cannot tolerate happiness. But to be spiritually free (and happy) is to be liberated from the delusion that we must in some way merit the gifts of God. And that liberation we find in the doctrine of the atonement.

The doctrine of the atonement is really the doctrine of God's love. God so loved mankind that He gave His Son into death for their forgiveness. The atonement is the evidence of the ages that God loves us. Our people are starved for the assurance that God loves them; the guilt that troubles their souls is proof for this. They are unable to forgive themselves because they feel their sin has alienated God's interest in them, and turned His love to disgust. If it could be the conviction of their innermost being that God understands them, accepts their contemptible nature, and yet loves them undiminishingly, they would experience their liberation. Love alone can give security. Guilt due to opinions of self would not exist if the conviction that God loves us unconditionally, permeated our being. Inner fears that bind our spirits may be irrational in view of our statement of belief, but man does not always follow the dictates of reason, especially in face of an emotion as powerful as fear. If "there is no fear in love," then it is love that is lacking in our religious life. If "perfect love casteth out fear," then it is love that is needed to relate the reality of the atonement to the fundamentals of human living, that we are responsible for the poverty of spiritual experience in our churches. For the atonement makes it possible for us to experience the love of God, and it is this experience that gives us the inner security to be free in spirit. We need to saturate our consciences in the truth that the righteousness of Christ is our righteousness, that we are, according to the doctrine of the atonement, fresh, clean and holy.

The Word of God is the only honest looking glass given among men.

The surgery of God's Spirit cuts away false pride.

—Pastor Gerhard Frost.

PRAY IN THE HOLY GHOST

Jude 20

More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of! Surely our day of hectic living and much activity needs explore again the vast, uncultivated areas of prayer! Do we fully realize what prayer is, and what tremendous things have been wrought through it? I firmly believe that those who accomplish most today, as was also true in the past, are people who pray. Not those who just talk about prayer, or who have faith in prayer, but those souls who permit the Holy Spirit to not only direct their entire life (Rom. 8:13-14), but their prayer-life as well, Jude writes: "Pray in the Holy Spirit." The early Church realized what prayer was, and what could be accomplished through it! We read that for ten days after Jesus had ascended they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;" and also, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

It was Jesus who promised that "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done of My Father which is in Heaven (Matt. 18:19). In this connection read also Daniel 2:10-23; I John 5:15-15; John 15:16; Jer. 33:3, etc. As a Church, and as Christians how often do we not stand nonplussed and defeated as the nine disciples to whom a seeking soul came for help, and Jesus coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, solving their predicament, said that the cause of their failure was "unbelief" and "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Just think of it, my friend, not being in the position to help a sin-sick soul to Christ because of our own lack to live in close fellowship with God, our unfaithfulness in prayer! "Ye have not, because ye ask not" . . . and James goes on to say: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (James 4:2-3). Which simply means this, that a great many prayers are not answered, they fail utterly to accomplish anything, they may be prayed but they bring nothing whatsoever down again for the simple reason that there is no connection established between the petitioner and his God! Prayer begins where the Publican started, where, before God, he cried: "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is here where prayer must begin, and it is this which undergirds, sustains, and gives the proper balance and urgency of prayer in one's life, the position of me (a sinner) standing before a Holy God, whom I can approach and make known my heart's need through the one and only way which God Himself has ordained, in the name of my Crucified Savior, and through the Holy Spirit! To pray in any other way, accomplishes simply nothing either for yourself or others; To not approach God in the Name of Jesus, and through the Spirit, is as effective before Almighty God as a heathen in darkest Africa beating his tom-tom.

Prayer is something which the Holy Spirit brings about, and manipulates in a believer's heart! It is only the believer who has the token and gift of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 4:6). How then can the unsaved, no matter how urgent the plea, ever expect to receive anything unless, and until, he has permitted the Holy Spirit to work his first fruits in his heart, that of repentance and faith? Thus the way is opened, Jesus comes in (Rev. 3:20), and then and there the Holy Spirit takes us his abode in your heart and continues His work in your life. Remember sinner friend, your prayer life begins where out of desperation over your lost condition you cry unto God, "Be merciful to me and save me." And from then on you can begin to pray, pray as you ought, and pray in such a way that God can hear and answer you! The Holy Spirit who has been working through the Word to

bring you to Christ, now takes up His position in your heart with His whole being, power and gifts, and continues His work in you, putting to death the life of the flesh, and empowering the new life of Christ in you! We are to obey the Spirit (Rom. 8:10-15). It is this which characterizes a Christian from beginning to the end! Note particularly verse 14 of Rom. 8!

It is this presence and power of the Spirit at the back of every prayer that assures one of answered prayer. That's why Jude says: "Pray in the Holy Spirit." Likewise Paul in Rom. 8:26-27! Show me any place in the Word where God can either hear or honor the prayer of one who continues to live unsaved, and in a rebellious state before Him! As long as you remain outside of Christ, you're outside of Grace, and God just cannot hear you! Read Isaiah 1:10-20; also 59:1-3; and Jer. 14:10-12!

My friend, if you have never prayed before, or as you ought, the urgency of the hour and day in which we now live should surely show you your need to get right with your God, to come into living relationship with Him, so that you, too, can utilize this tremendous power (PRAYER) which only a child of God can use!

—R. O. O.

THOUGHTS ON LUTHERAN UNION

(Continued From Page One)

to give each part the representation of one layman and one pastor, or one of each for approximately every three thousand members. Missouri Synod, which is not much larger than the proposed new body, also has such a system which makes it a rare and prized privilege for even a pastor of the church to be delegate to the General Convention of that body. It would mean a heavier leaning on the officials of the church, and a greater centralization of power for the conduct of the huge business that would have to be handled. With all respect to fine officials, it has always been the healthiest for the church when the "grass roots" could adequately express itself in decisions of the church. We would have to face the fact that the democratic principle that the local congregation is the final authority in matters of policy and would be just one step more removed from controlling the general policies of our church.

We face a peculiar problem in Canada. Several of our leaders have assured us that we are not ready for union in Canada. We in the E.L.C. are making definite plans for going autonomous, perhaps in 1951 or 1952, so that we will become a self-ruling body, aided perhaps by a subsidy from the general body of the E.L.C. If the proposed union goes into effect before we become autonomous, it would either force a union of groups which do not feel ready to join in Canada, or it would leave three autonomous bodies some of which are not prepared to go forward on that basis. If our church in Canada becomes autonomous before such a union is effected, but with the aid of a subsidy from the general body, and the other two bodies in Canada join with the new body, we would have the strange situation where these Canadian branches of the U.E.L.C. and A.L.C. would be along subsidizing us as a self-supporting body with whom they could not be joined. They would belong to our "mother church" and we would not. Perhaps these situations would not prevent the larger church union, but it should give us thought just what the situation would be here in Canada if this union is effected. It has been felt by some that it would be an impossibility to unite the three bodies in Canada and also become autonomous, so that the Canadian branch of the new united body would become a self-supporting and self-ruling church. What does it make of the future of our church in Canada?

Another problem would be the con-

sequent relation to the World Council of Churches to which both the A.L.C. and the U.E.L.C. belong. Some assurances have come that those bodies are already satisfied to come out of the Council, but it should be considered whether there would be a composite majority of those favoring the Council membership within the new body, large enough to thrust us into the World Council.

These are some of the problems which we must face. We have been watching the columns of our church papers for advantages and reasons why we should join. There are many unsatisfied questions whether we will gain anything by the increased size. Will there be less overhead? Will we have more weight and influence in our judgments and impacts. Will we be a stronger spiritual power? No doubt there will be advantages in the consolidation of local work, where even the federation and co-operation in the American Lutheran Conference could not eliminate divisions entirely. It would be desirable to see more concrete advantages of this union set before us in the church papers. To the writer, many of them have seemed rather vague and unconvincing, and not too often mentioned in the much writing. It is truly said, this is one of the greatest decisions our church has been asked to make, and we should have very good reasons for such a momentous step. Perhaps someone better informed than the writer can give us that help.

—K. C. Grundahl.

HALVOR N. RONNING —MY BROTHER

By N. N. Ronning

It will be much easier to write a sketch of my brother by forgetting the public and simply keeping in mind some of his friends.

Halvor N. Ronning inherited his father's spirit of adventure and leadership. He usually took charge of all kinds of games, in the highland fling and on skie and skates, he had few equals.

It was no surprise to those who knew him well that he became the first missionary to China from the Hauge Synod or that late one fall he trekked 400 miles, together with his wife and two men, through the wilderness of northern Alberta, Canada, to establish a Norwegian settlement.

Love of Nature

He inherited his mother's generosity and love of nature. It was said of her that no beggar coming to her door asking for bread went empty-handed away. She had the largest and finest fruit and flower garden in the community. She and Halvor planted many apple trees, berry bushes and flowers. The time came when neighbors flocked to the garden and feasted free of charge on red apples and luscious berries.

The most beautiful sight I remember from childhood was the rose-tinted cloud of blossoms covering the apple trees.

Halvor planted gardens in the States, in China and in Canada. In Canada he had the finest rock garden I have ever seen. It would have paid a class in geology to examine the many kinds of stones which he had picked up on his trips. He had beautiful flowers I have seen nowhere else.

Early one morning during a stay at his home in Minneapolis, I looked down at the lawn in front of my window. There he stood, tall and straight, with disheveled hair, holding his arms out toward a large rose bush in full bloom, drinking in the beauty and the fragrance of the red roses.

When returning from a strenuous trip, dead tired, a few hours in his beloved garden made him a new man again. Flowers were not only plants; they were eloquent witnesses to the beauty and love of God.

Broad Interests

I have never known a person who was more keenly and more intelligently interested in economic, social, political and mainly religious move-

ments throughout the world. He retained this interest even in old age. When I told him a few months ago that I had been reading several books by Christian Russian authors who had been banished from their native land, he became very much interested and made the prophetic statement that a nation that could produce such men would not in the long run be able to keep Christ out with an iron curtain.

He was always intellectually inquisitive. That accounts for the fact that he always remained young and stimulating.

All through life he was heart and soul on the side of the poor and oppressed, be they individuals, classes or countries. He had faith to believe that out of the age-old struggle on the part of the lower classes for a fairer share of the good things of life, there would gradually emerge a better day.

Spiritual Insight

As a minister, missionary and evangelist he had developed an almost uncanny ability to sense what hindered persons from making a full surrender to Christ. He had come to learn that no two persons had exactly the same background, temperament, talents and training. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit each person must be led according to his or her needs. He warned against making one's own spiritual experiences the standard for others.

He startled me one day by saying, "On that great day we shall discover how much God has accomplished in the world even outside the organized church." Still, few men realized more the importance of the organized church and gave it more loyal support.

After years of experience and in a spirit of humility he did effective work in congregations which had never before invited an evangelist.

Spiritual life was at a low ebb in the parish of Bø, Telemark, in his boyhood. Lay preachers once in a while visited our neighborhood and Halvor attended their meetings together with his mother.

His teacher in the public school had been influenced by the Haugeans and was interested in foreign missions. As a boy Halvor prayed God to make him a missionary.

While attending a teachers' seminary he entered into conscious fellowship with Jesus. In the meantime a new minister had taken charge of the congregation. As a fruit of his preaching and personal work a deep and widespread spiritual awakening took place.

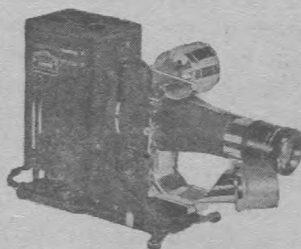
At Red Wing Seminary, Halvor found, as did so many others, a spiritual home. He was much influenced in the art of preaching by one of his teachers, Professor J. N. Kildahl.

Time and again he wrote me, especially in later years, that Bible verses would suddenly burst upon him like a glorious revelation.

In Glory

When his wife died in China, he sent us this message, "Hannah in glory." When he received the telegram that his oldest son had lost his life in the wilderness of northern Alberta, he looked up to heaven and exclaimed, "My son in glory." When his son, Talbert, sent me the telegram it read, Father in glory."

Peacefully he had slipped into the shadows and entered into the light of eternal day. —The Missionary.



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WOMEN'S MISSIONARY FEDERATION

MRS. E. M. BERGH, Camrose, Alberta, W.M.F. Editor.

Deadline for material to W.M.F. Editor the 2nd of each month

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

There are many who think that they have no time to seek the Kingdom of God. They have no time to go to church on Sunday, no time to read a few verses of the Bible and say a prayer on Sunday, or on any other day of the week. They must work on the week days and fail to use the Lord's Day as He would have them use it. Sunday must be used as every other day, for purposes of money-making. Their lives are lives of unceasing drudgery and toil, everyday saturated with anxiety and worry about the present and future. Toil and moil, early, late, Sunday, every other day, constitutes the philosophy of their lives. They are of the earth, earthy, and make a business of murdering their conscience and annihilating every suggestion of a higher and nobler aim in life.

Friend, if materialism is the philosophy of your life, and you consider nothing else worth while but the accumulation of physical wealth, I would have you remember Jesus feeding the five thousand in the wilderness. These people were attracted by the wonderful words of our Lord, lifting their lives to the higher plane of righteousness, and forgetting their immediate material needs. But what does the Lord Jesus do, He feeds them, miraculously, and preserves their lives.

He will do the same thing for you today. People who go to church on Sunday and set aside a few minutes morning or evening for the reading of God's Word and uniting in prayer and praise about the family altar, are made the recipients of God's peace in heart and home bringing joy and sunshine into their lives. Their minds are filled with holy thoughts and the blessed promises of God, the very bread of life, upon which their souls may feed, day by day during the entire week. They are ever conscious of God's gracious presence. He adds joy and contentment to their daily labors, and they realize in their personal lives the truth of the words of Jesus: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Therefore, let us labor faithfully and honestly during the six days of the week, in whatever calling God has placed us, but, as we love our own souls, let us use the seventh day as a Sabbath, for rest and recuperation of body and mind, dedicating the day to the contemplation of God's Word and the assembling of ourselves in the sanctuary of His House.

Upon each working day of the week, let us set aside a short period for spiritual meditation and prayer. Let us turn our thoughts to the Father of light, from whom every good and perfect gift comes. Let us not think, "I must rely upon my strength and will-power," but rather, let us think, "My daily bread, and every good thing of life, must come from God alone, and to Him will I utter my prayers and supplications, as well as my praise and thanksgiving. But He gives me these necessities of life through the labor of my hands, and therefore let me be faithful and industrious in my calling, and the blessing of the Lord upon my life will not fail."

Dear Lord God, our heavenly Father, help us to place all our trust in Thee and Thy blessing upon our daily labors. Amen.

—C. Svendsen.

CAMROSE LUTHERAN W.M.F. SELF-DENIAL PROGRAM

An inspiring Candle Light service was rendered by Mrs. A. Lysing, Mrs.

Stromberg, and Miss Stella Holland. Mrs. O. C. Johnson led in devotion. Musical numbers by Messrs. C. Magnuson, K. Knudtson, Jasman, Luther Olson and Fjordbotten and a reading by Mrs. Rutz.

Self denial offering of \$41.31 was received.

NEWS FROM CHRIST LUTHERAN W.M.F., SEXSMITH, ALTA.

The W.M.F. Program Series is being used and we are enjoying blessings from the study of St. John's Gospel.

The Parish Bulletin for March (Home Mission Month of the W.M.F.) was paid for by the Aid.

At the April meeting a Life Membership Pin was presented to Mrs. W. Guderjan as a going-away gift in preparation of her services as a chartered member. The presentation was made by Mrs. H. Judkins, a local member as well as Circuit Secretary of the L.M. and I.M. Department.

REPORT OF EDMONTON CIRCUIT W.M.F. CONVENTION

The Edmonton Circuit W.M.F. held their annual convention at Central Lutheran Church, Edmonton on Saturday, April 15, in conjunction with the spring circuit meeting.

Opening devotion was given by the Circuit president, Mrs. O. Likness, Irma, and the local president, Mrs. R. Hanson, Edmonton, brought a brief greeting and welcomed the convention.

One session was given over to business and reports from Department secretaries. The Mission Department showed an increase in the number of societies using the Mission Box. Thirteen out of sixteen W.M.F. are now contributing to Mission Box. Education and Charities Secretary also reported growth in their departments. Interest in special Church Appeals was evidenced by the substantial amounts given. Life Membership and In Memoriam and Promotion department secretaries' reports were also very encouraging.

The theme, "Build for God." I Cor. 3-9 was divided into three sub-topics: (1) Mrs. G. Pedel, Irma, "Bought to be Builders;" (2) Mrs. H. Melsness, Edmonton, "Prepared to be Builders;" (3) Mrs. G. Hendrickson, To-field, "Working as Builders."

Musical numbers by Miss Bodil Gottlieb, Edmonton, Mrs. G. Pedel, Irma and Mrs. H. Cooper, Edmonton were very much enjoyed.

A brief service of installation conducted by Mrs. O. Likness concluded our convention.

Following is the new executive of Edmonton Circuit: President, Mrs. P. Bjornson, To-field; vice-president, Mrs. I. Moen, To-field; secretary, Mrs. P. Olson, 11936, 86 street, Edmonton; treasurer, Mrs. R. Hanson, 11415 78 Avenue, Edmonton; Charities secretary, Mrs. N. Djos, Sedgewick; Promotion secretary, Mrs. L. Foster, 11-629, 129 Street, Edmonton; Mission secretary, Mrs. A. V. Billsten, 11-518, 123 Street, Edmonton; Education, Mrs. M. Likness, Daysland; Life Membership and In Memoriam, Mrs. F. Gotheridge, Round Hill.

—Mrs. P. Olson.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

"Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you..." Matt. 28-20. These were the words of Jesus to His disciples and also for the church today.

We members of the W.M.F. can have a great part in fulfilling this command through our word in the program of education for our young people from childhood through college.

As District secretary for Higher Education I would stress that every

society in Canada take heed to this great challenge by our prayers and gifts. It is our duty and privilege to support our church schools and send our boys and girls there if possible.

Christian Education provides Christian instruction and gives them an opportunity to study His word and thus have a chance to mould their personalities in accordance with the life and teachings of Christ.

It is a big challenge. Many a boy and girl can testify to the fact that they found their Savior at one of these schools and have here consecrated their lives in full time Christian service.

Every community in our district has some young people, as products of these schools in doing some full time or even part time service in extending God's Kingdom.

Our Christian schools have been faced with a crisis to cope with modern standards and therefore contributions are needed.

How wonderful it would be if our aids would send in contributions now, as it would help our church greatly. It was encouraging to note some increase had been made in our thank offerings, but let us strive for more this year.

I would also like to remind our Circuit presidents to give Christian education a prominent place, as they plan the program for the coming spring and fall conventions.

May God give us a vision of the value of our church schools and also a desire to give and pray for this great work.

—Mrs. J. Hetland,
District Secretary,
Higher Education,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND IN MEMORIAM

"Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." I Cor. 15-58.

We are grateful to God for what has been accomplished for His Kingdom through the Life Membership and In Memoriam Department, of our W.M.F. The many projects given support by this department, outside of the Synodical Budget, are very worthy of every gift.

We are thankful for all who have contributed during the past year to this department. God bless you all! Each year shows an encouraging increase. The sum of \$627.00 was raised in our Canada District during 1948, and figures for 1949 reveal the sum of \$900.00. Has your local W.M.F. had a share in the giving of these gifts? If not you have missed much joy and blessing. Let each society begin now to make it a practise each year to contribute to this work. Try to balance the giving to the different departments, if possible. Be alert to opportunities for honoring both the living and the dead. If a Life Membership Pin is not a suitable gift, as, for instance, to a man, the only way seems to be to give some other gift as you feel guided.

Send the ten dollar required contribution to the N.L.C.C. Financial Secretary, 212 Wiggins Avenue, Saskatoon, and your order will be filled.

May we all work diligently, and pray for God's blessing so that this year's work in the Life Membership and In Memoriam department may be even more fruitful than in former years.

"Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." John 15-8.

—Mrs. O. I. Lundberg,
Sexsmith, Alberta,
Canada District Secretary for Life Membership and In Memoriam Department.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND IN MEMORIAM PROJECTS FOR 1949-50

Lutheran World Action	\$5,000.00
Social Service Scholarship	3,000.00
Foreign Mission Scholarship	3,000.00
Active Needy Pastors	3,000.00
Book Mission	500.00
Bible Fund	400.00
Home Mission Radio	
Broadcasting	2,000.00
Home Mission Parish	
Workers	4,000.00
Repairs for Lena Dahl	
School, China	3,000.00
Literature for China	1,000.00
Printing of Primary Bible	
History for Madagascar	1,000.00
Madagascar Model Home	1,000.00
Equipment for Hospital	
in South Africa	8,000.00
Publication of "Life of Martin Luther for S. America	1,500.00
Bethany Sunset Home	1,000.00
Clifton College Texas	600.00
Concordia College	1,000.00
Luther College	1,000.00
Student Service Commission	1,000.00
Jewish Mission	1,000.00
Education aid for worthy	
Indian Student	500.00
Surplus to be used for Church extension and for Christian Education.	

ATTENTION W.M.F. CIRCUIT SECRETARIES!

Reports of your W.M.F. Spring Conventions and copies of topics given will be very much appreciated as soon as possible following your convention.

—(Mrs.) E. M. Bergh.

MISSION MINDED THINKING

Our District abounds in Home Mission opportunities. We attended the Pastoral Conference of Edmonton-Circuits. A fine program was prepared. Pastor Henning Olsen of Chauvin gave a spirited and thought-provoking Bible study on "Women's Place in the New Testament." In the afternoon Pastor Grundahl presented thoughts on the the question of Lutheran Union. A summary of his presentation is to be found in the issue of The Shepherd. Pastor I. J. Saugen led in the discussion on Evangelism. He centred the discussion on: Preaching Evangelism, Evangelism of Visitation, Unified Bible Reading Program, Adult Instruction, and Refresher Courses for present members.

In the discussion that followed an excellent suggestion was made by Pastor Sterling Johnson, His reference was to the country pastor, especially to a pastor serving many congregations. Often the thought of reaching the individual members in the many congregations becomes so overwhelming that the visiting becomes a sporadic thing. Pastor Johnson suggested that a period of time say a month or more be set aside for each congregation. During that time an intensive period of house to house witnessing could be carried on by the pastor and by capable and interested lay witnesses. The thought would be to reach every home in the radius of that church centre. Congregations could be taken one by one in that way. The suggestion has much merit as this would lead to a more prayerful, systematized, concentrated visitation program. It can have tremendous results.

It is trial that proves one thing weak and another strong. A house built on the sand is in fair weather just as good as if builded on a rock.

—Henry Ward Beecher.

W.M.F. COOK BOOK

Are you looking for a birthday or "shower" gift? Why not give a W.M.F. Cook Book? There are still some to be had, and we urge you all to order your supply NOW. Price is one dollar. Send your order to Miss Clara Haugen, 212 Wiggins Avenue, Saskatoon, Sask.